

Before and Beyond Hawkins by toinfinityandstrangerthings

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Summary: Max's story through my eyes when she was growing up in California and eventually in Hawkins.

1. Prologe

Max's POV

California. It was , no is it was Max's first home always. The beach, sun, palm trees , all of it she loved. She didn't have many friends back there, most of them thought she was just a angry freak. Even in Preschool, Max had been very aggressive. She was the girl who tried to be sweet but if you did one thing to get her angry, you were in for it.

Though there was one person who was with her through all of her angry moments.

Henry.

They had met in preschool. He was the only one not turned away from max. He never got on her nerves, in fact it was quite the opposite. He was ALWAYS on her good side. Sharing with her and even when being yelled at, still smiling and laughing. They loved getting in trouble together, even though Henry tried to keep Max out of mischief. Occasionally in preschool and kindergarten giving max a kiss on the cheek while holding her hand. But max allowed this, and smiled whenever he did. They grew up together. From the time they were 3 to 13. He wished it was longer. Henry had found out max was moving to Indiana at the end of 7th grade. He was crushed. His best friend , his favorite person was moving miles away from him.

Max and him wouldn't get to graduate together or even go to high school together. They had a plan, that they would graduate together and then go on some random road trip together. But Max's life had gotten complicated and hard and only he knew that she broke down daily. She wouldn't ever tell anyone else this, even her mom didn't know.

A friend like Henry , was one of a kind. NO one else would ever live up to him. Max had cried in his arms the day no the hour she found out she was moving to stupid lame Indiana. Where there wouldn't be a Henry. Well there would be but not the one she needed. But there was still 4 months till she left for Indiana. 4 more months to spend

every second together. But they would also think back on the memories they had together.

2. Chapter 1

Max's POV

Preschool. That was the first half day away from her mom. Max wasn't thrilled about it. She didn't cry though. She just hugged her mom till she was forced to let go.

She didn't know what to do with herself. All the teachers were suggesting things to do in the classroom. Being the almost 4 year old she was. She was very sassy. The first day though was good. She hung out with some girls but after the first week all of them didn't like her. The majority of the girls in her class were Blondes and since she was the redhead she was the odd one out.

She often did things alone when she could. She was happier this way and she told her teachers that. Though in the second month it changed. One day the teacher had told the class that one of the kids from another class was moving into theirs. His Name was Henry. All the girls wanted to play with him but max. Though when snack came around he chose to sit next to her.

"hello, im Henry" he said as he pointed to. Himself.

Max giggled as he said this. Then he made a funny face.

Just staring at her. In that moment max lost all intreats in her goldfish and juice. "Whats your name ?" Henry asked while trying to guess in his head. He turned his head to each side waiting for a response.

Max lifted her head finally and looked him in the eyes

"Im Maxine, but my mommy and daddy call me Max for short"

She then looked down at his hand smiling and instantly grabbed it. His eyes widened but slowly a smile spread across his face aswell.

" Lets be best friends Max" Henry said as he put a goldfish in his mouth with his free hand. In that moment, max bursts out laughing, everyone in the room turns their heads in the direction of max. Max

hadn't laughed ONCE in the 2 months she was here and If she had it was so quiet no one heard. The teacher was about to yell at max for being so loud but , she didn't since this is the happiest she had seen her.

" Yes Henry , your my new best friend, your so funny," and once she said that Henry started to laugh with her. Though they were still holding hands and that is how Henry and Max met. Though there were a LOT more memories to be made with the duo.

Till next time...

Peace and love

Liza

3. Chapter 2

A Unknown Feeling

Max's POV

The main guy in max's life wasn't Henry though, it was David.

David was max's dad, the one who made her laugh and the one who played sports and dress up with max. He was a rugby player in college and loved soccer on the side. From the time max could walk, he was throwing the ball to her for rugby and kicking the soccer ball her way.

He didn't notice but sometimes from the time she was one, she rolled the ball back. She grasped the concept of rolling a ball early and he was proud. He knew she would go far in a sport or something sporty at least. He was his first child and he would raise her to be the smart, beautiful strong willed woman she deserved to be. The love he had for his Maxine was infinite. He had always wanted a little girl, that he could raise to be strong and who was as beautiful as her mom.

Whenever he would pick her up from Kindergarten, he would take her out to get a snack together and usually max picked ice cream. They went to one ice cream shop a lot. The person who owned the shop knew them by heart. Max's favorite flavor was vanilla, she didn't mind chocolate but it wasn't vanilla! One memory though stood out from all the rest though. A day that started out well but ended on an unknown note, to her at least.

It was a Friday, the best day of the week. David was picking her up early to take her on a special daddy daughter date. Max only was in school about a hour and a half and then was picked up. She was sad though cause she had to say goodbye to Henry for the week. Though then Henry said "Max, your coming over tomorrow to my house, for a playdate! No need to have those tears in your eyes" as he gave her a reassuring hug and a smile. Max had totally forgotten that she was seeing Henry tomorrow, but now was more excited for the weekend than ever.

She grabbed her dad's hand and off they went. Though when they got to the ice cream parlor, there were police all around the store Max's dad instantly grabbed max's hand and they both stood outside their car. Both watching and noticing the abundance of cars and emergency vehicles around them.

"dad lets go get the ice cream!" max says smiling and looking up at David.

The look on David's face was horror. He was in shock. Being a family friend of the owner he took max as close as they could to the entrance. David started talking to the police about what had happened. When he heard, he put his head in his empty hand. Max still confused asked the police officer "where is Mr. Gray, me and daddy came to get ice cream!" she says jumping up and down.

All the police said was "he went to a better place sweetie". Max took this as he had moved to another town or state. It wasn't till years later that max would find out that Mr. Gray had been shot and that's why she knew saw him again. But more about that later....

Till next time peace

And love

-Liza

4. Chapter 3

Max's POV

It was the end of Max's school year. She had just finished 1st grade. She had learned so much at the end of her 6th year of life and start of 7th. She had , done really well learning spelling words and also starting to read more books. She was if you would like to call it . The top of the class. All the girls envied her because she got the highest scores. Although max wanted to scream at them, Henry stoped her. SO many times throughout the end of kindergarten and the first grade year , she had done so well on tests or just responding to the teacher. The other girls , always teased her. But with the help of Henry and her mom, she didn't fight back. She just nodded and walked away. Henry defended her and told the girls not to mess with max.

This was during the time that her mom and dad's relationship was starting to slowly fall apart. Max noticed that the three of them rarely wanted to go out together,. It was always just with her mom or just with her dad. Back at the end of kindergarten , max's mom had fallen pregnant with their second child. Max was so excited to become a big sister. She wanted a little brother , but didn't hate the thought of a little sister. Her father also was excited. He couldn't believe he would finally have another daughter like max or a son.

Though sadly, max's mom miscarried early on. It was devastating for her and her father. Max didn't know what was going on. She knew it was sad , because her parents attitudes changed. Her mom and dad suddenly having HUGE mood swings. Sometimes super overjoyed to hug her and kiss her cheek. Other days ,getting frustrated at max for the littlest things. Max still was positive though, She knew whatever her parents were going through that they needed space. Over time they had to become the happy family they were before right?.Sometimes max told Henry that school or his house were better then being home. Being with Henry and his parents gave max happiness. They had loved max from the first time they met her. They were so happy that their son Henry had a loyal , funny and beautiful girl to call his best friend. Max's mom even sometimes

dropped max off at henrys without telling her, and they would spend the day and evening together. Max and Henry would be up sometimes till 11pm which was late for both of them. Talking and laughing. Sometimes max even going into detail about how her parents seemed distant. Not much though. She always shrugged it off and moved onto another topic. Max felt a feeling, it was unknown. It wasn't quite sad but it felt like it in a way but not all. She was confused with this feeling. But whenever she felt like this she just thought about how Henry and her mom promised it would get better. It had to..

Stay tuned for my next chapter. I have some fun stuff planned(;

-liza

5. Chapter 4

It was February and second grade couldn't of been going better. Max's teacher Mrs Reed was the best. Max loved how she taught with such ease. She always made the lessons fun and on Fridays they played bingo always. It was her favorite grade by far. She wasn't sure that she would like second grade but , its helped her forget about first. Most of the girls were in the other two classes. Max was all about wearing dresses with leggings this year. She had some cute dresses that were not too girly that she loved to wear. She also loved having her long red hair in pony tails. The curl of her hair made it stand out. She loved using hair ties with bows on them so it would add something.

Today though was a good day. Max had worn her favorite dress. It was blue with a bird on it. She had hair ties with white bows on them. She couldn't be any cuter. Today after school she was going home with Henry! It was Chinese new year and she was invited to spend the holiday with his family. She was so excited, since her family didn't celebrate this holiday. Henry was from China, his family had moved here before he was born. But they still had a lot of family back in china. She was so excited, she got some money even, since hhis family considered her , their " daughter in law" . She as over at his house more then her own.

The evening started out with them swinging on the playground in henrys backyard. Seeing who could go higher.

" Henry you Won't ever go higher then me" max says as she laughs in between words. The smile on her face when looking at him. Henrys mom was looking from the window, before snpaping a picture of them together laughing. They both then flew off the swing and saw how far they could jump off. Max though accidentally slid on a rock and fell down. Henry instantly rushed over to her and put his arm around her.

"You okay Max? gosh dang rocks " he says while standing up. He then offers her his hadn't and she gladly takes it. But pulls him to the ground instead. " look now we BOTH fell.

Both then standing up, Henry offered his hand to Max once again. This time she took it and held it tight as they walked inside for dinner. Max's favorite ethnic food was Chinese. It had to be Henry's mom's though. American Chinese couldn't compare. They made lanterns that night also. They were then going to a lake where they would release them with other Chinese families in their community. Henry helped Max with hers and vice versa. They made their lanterns colorful and cute. They put each other's names on their lanterns.

Henry's mom's looking over at them, giving them their distance. Then someone comes up behind her. It's Henry's dad.

"What are you thinking about dear?" He says while noticing she is in deep thought.

"Oh Frank, I think she is it" she says smiling and getting teary eyed. Linda wiping her tears with a tissue.

"What do you mean Linda?" He says looking more confused than ever.

"Frank, I think she will be our daughter in law one day, I mean the way she laughs at him and holds his hand. She is so good to our son, I don't think anything will ever tear them apart" She says though smiling now.

6. Chapter 5

It was here, the last month of 5th grade. Soon Max would be on Summer vacation and be in middle school next year. One year closer to graduating with her best friend. Max was now 11, which was insane to Henry. That they were so old. In December max would be 12 and Henry had big plans for her birthday. For the longest time max and him had planned each other birthdays. His was December also, but a week after max's. Though they had celebrated their birthdays in the past. They both agreed to celebrate their birthdays separate from now on. IN the past it was a Dinosaur party, sports party, superhero party, Disney princess and prince party and so many more.

Summer went by in a flash. So many trips to the beach and shopping. Late nights staying up all night talking and laughing. And most importantly building sandcastles together. Max and Henry were the best at making sandcastles. Though max was forced to be away from Henry for a month of the summer for a stupid road trip to Indiana. Max's mom had met someone out there. Though at the time Max didn't know this, she just thought it was a vacation, but was curious why David wasn't coming with them. The town was so small and max hated it. The people were creepy looking and it smelled. Not a good smell either. They had a hotel and then went over to this coffee shop. It was semi nice but nothing special. The she met them. A man named Mark. He looked weird.

max hesitantly moved out her arm to shake his hand, but quickly pulled it back after.

" so you must be the max that your mom is always telling me about ? Aren't you adorable " He says as he looks into max's eyes.

" please DONT call me adorable, that what you call a baby .puppies or kittens NOT me." Max says looking him right in the eyes.

Maxine's mom was shocked

"Maxine Beth Mayfield, not ANOTHER word. Mark I'm so sorry for her behavior" she says to him. Apparently her mom had known mark

sine she was in 3rd grade. They had been dating and hearing this made max's heart break. Her dad didn't deserve this. Her mom said it would get better. This wasn't better, this was worse. This was going to be a LONG month. Full of boring, lame activities. Oh how she wished she could buy a plane ticket back home.

7. Chapter 6

" So how was Indiana, fun being cold?" Henry says as he and max walk into their first day of middle school. Henry had grown a lot since max had seen him last. He was getting so tall. Taller then her , that wasn't right to her haha.

" Indiana sucks, its cold and it rains all the time and they don't have the beach but most importantly I didn't have two important people with me" max says while taking Henry's hand. "Henry I missed you more then words can say, I missed pranking people daily with you, going to get buffalo chicken wraps together, running into the ocean together and just your voice." She says.

" don't get too sappy on me now mayfield. Your tough remember. Your mad max, remember the day I gave you that nickname. " he says looking over at her.

max stays silent for a moment but then once they reach the doors to the gym for the opening assembly, she stops.

" Of course I remember, it was when we were 5 and I was having a bad day and someone teased me calling me names. You told them that I am mad. But I'm madmax because it sounded like a cool superhero name. They backed off , all thanks to you Henry. You had my back that day, and turned the tease into a nickname that now gives me strength, I can't thank you enough for that" she finishes by resting her head in his chest before pulling away. They then walk into the auditorium and down the stairs.

When they sit down though Henry motions Max to move closer. He then whispers something in her ear " remember madmax, we are going to crush middle school, with our brains and mischievousness" he says and that makes max giggle and a bit too loud. The whole grade looked at her and then stoped and moved on with the assembly. Max then put her head on Henry's chest again. Hearing his heart beat gave her peace. Henry took this opportunity to look down and kiss max's head. He loved the smell of her hair and rested his head on hers for a minute before lifting. Middle school was suppose to be the worst years of your life, but max and Henry were

determined to make it the best. They had the same schedules, (thanks to henry's mom) so they would be together all the time.

their first class was history..max and Henry quickly ran to grab two seats next to each other. But noticed girl was sitting in the seat that was next to henrys.

" Um can I sit there please? i want to be next to my best friend" max says.

" Its by last name. Last time I checked you were M and Henry had a C last name. I also have a C last name so.

Max then took a step back, no it couldn't be.

she had moved. She wasn't ever coming back.

"Maxine, don't you remember me? Clarissa , Henry's first friend in Mrs Jennifers class back in preschool. You didn't even want to be his friend remember, you were all alone, you weirdo." She says before sitting next to Henry.

Max wouldn't fight though, it wasn't worth it. Instead she put her stuff down and ran out of the classroom. To the bathroom of course. Thankfully no one was in there. And she cried. For the first time in years. Letting it all out, Henry's friend was back , the one who approached him first when he came to her class. She had a point and thats what hurt max so much.

But max then whipped her tears and looked up and stood up. She thought. " But Clarissa doesn't have years of friendship with Henry like I do, she isn't going to win and take him away from me." She said before walking back to class. Maybe fighting back would be in her agenda this year.

8. Chapter 7

It was soon December. Max and Henry's birthday months.

Sadly back in September, their schedules had been changed and they only had 2 out of the 8 classes together. It was rough on max. Since at home it was her parents starting to fight nightly. It hurt her emotionally a LOT. The one smiling parents when she came home were often times out of the house. Leaving her home alone. Max didn't have anyone but Henry. It was sad to think or even say. But no one accepted and loved her like him.

It was the day before her birthday. Henry though was busy with homework , mainly a huge science project. Max was turning 12 tomorrow. December 14th. Tomorrow was also a Friday. Max knew Henry had planned something special for tomorrow. She couldn't wait to see what. It was the only think keeping her going. Having to Blair music nightly and get away from her parents. She felt so alone but tomorrow would be better. With that she closed her eyes in her room and somehow managed to fall asleep

Early the next morning , she woke up. She jumped out of bed and got dressed in a nicer outfit. She wore a nice pair of pants and a nice hoodie. Though Henry wasn't in school. He was apparently out for the weekend. This shocked max. He didn't tell her he would be away. He never did this. He always told her. The day turned from good, to horrible. The teachers said happy birthday but she could care less. She felt so alone and scared. Her dad barely remembered it and mom didn't.

If this is the new normal, me spending less and less time with Henry, then. I don't want to live. I can't do this alone. why is my life such a shit show right now? My parents can't even talk to each other without yelling. Today was suppose to be a good day. With her best friend, and them laughing. But it was boring and dragged on. She was about to go to bed when someone knocked on the door.

When she opened it though it wasn't anyone. All that was left was a photo. Max slowly hesitantly reached down to pick up the photo. What she saw, brought tears to her eyes. Then on the back was a

note. " happy birthday maxine, you didn't think I forgot your birthday did you?, cause I didn't, but Henry did." It said and it was signed Clarissa.

9. Chapter 8

Pain that's all Max felt. Looking at the clock it was 11:59pm. Her birthday was over. And no one cared or did anything. She wasn't used to this. Why had he done what he did. It isn't like she should be upset over this, but she is. It hurt, so bad. So deep. It was like her self esteem fell to zero again and the nicknames all flooded to her head, that people use to call her... the bad ones. The times where she wanted to be mad but didn't because she was held back, it wasn't right. She had a RIGHT to be mad in all the situations of the past and this one right here, clenching her hands, she said. "I won't get walked over anymore, I'm DONE, no one NOT even you Henry, can do this to me."

Picking up the picture and staring at it once more. The blood became to boil in Max's veins. Henry was KISSING Clarissa, BUT not only that, he was holding her hand. And with that thought, Max ripped up the picture and then since no one was home screamed as loud as she could. She let it all out, but this time through screaming and knocking things in her room down.

"YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE ME, YOU MADE A PROMISE WHEN WE WERE 3. YOU LITTLE " Max couldn't even focus anymore. The tears were streaming down her face faster than a cheetah running in the savanna. It was then that Max instantly went to her closet. She took out all the dresses she owned and threw them, not tore them apart and then put them in the garbage. All the bows, gone, all the makeup gone. She wouldn't ever touch or wear them again. They just showed her how weak she was. It was as if everyone, even her parents had abandoned her. Henry was the last piece of her life that made sense. But now that was taken away from her also. It was worse though, cause Max's mom and dad had gotten a divorce. Mark had also come to visit from time to time. His son Billy. HATED her. She always tried to be nice whenever he came and did what he told her, most of the time this was to be quiet and give him space. BUT not anymore. She was done with everyone.

Tomorrow would be different. Walking into school alone and going through the rest of middle school alone.

10. Chapter 9

Walking into school the next week was rough. The Monday started off good. Max though was wearing some jeans and a bomber jacket now. Instead of a dress. Which was different to see for people. It was the last week before winter break. So max hoped it would go by first class was history and max went to her seat and sat. Opening her notebook and doodling before class. Soon Henry walks into the room and then a little after Clarissa.

Max doesn't even notice and continues drawing. Though Henry walks over to her desk. "Hey where were you this morning? I was waiting at my locker for you" he says.

Nothing. No response or sign that max is listening to what he is saying. It killed her deep deep deep down not replying to him. But she instantly pushed that feeling out of her body and didn't even look at him .

"Max whats going on? Are you okay? Did your mom and dad have another fight?" He asks.

That was it. Max couldn't take it anymore.

"Listen Chen, I need you to go sit down in your desk and get the hell away from me" she says in a quiet but forceful tone.

Henry was confused. She never called him by his last name EVER. It was obvious that she was upset but what caused it. He had to find out. He was his best friend his everything.

Class though then started and he had to sit next to Clarissa. Who was just staring at him the whole time. Ma though was participating as much as she could and going to work hard this year to get the grades she deserved.

Soon the class was over and it was onto the next one. Thankfully she didn't have Henry in it. But before she could leave Henry stoped her at the door.

"Seriously Max whats wrong.I am concerned, you barely have talked to me today. I want to help. You can come over today if you need to, I can have my mom make some coo-" Henry said before max had it.

" Listen , I can't I have to study for tests and I want to skateboard and just be alone. But thanks Chen" she says and with that she starts to go but Henry grabs her wrist

"Max PLEASE tell me whats wrong. Your scaring me, this isn't you, you never study for test, you just get amazing grade cause your smart. Please come over today, my mom has missed you , she keeps asking when is max" he starts but then

"No, NO, I am not coming over Chen"

" Max please come over , I feel I haven't seen you in ages and we haven't laughed and done pranks in a while" he says

And with that max says.

" First let go of my wrist, and second ask Clarissa, you two seem close now" she says and then with that he lets go and she off.

11. Chapter 10

Max had a boring winter break, to say the least.

The amount of times Henry had called and even come over was more than max could count. She wouldn't talk to him though. It was too much. She wished so much that there was a guy out there that would care and listen to her. Someone who could be her best friend. It felt like he had been set up to just be her friend, cause she was alone. Maybe Henry never wanted to be her friend in the first place.

In that moment sitting on her bed, she wished she could be back in Indiana. Maybe the guys there were nicer then they were in California. she had hope that they were. Max had just found out that her mom and future step dad were moving to Indiana. Max had wanted her to go with them. Max said yes. She wanted to get away from all this. At least in hawkins she could start out fresh. No one would know her. But she had to wait till the end of 7th grade. Since they had a wedding to plan.

Soon though the break was over and it was back to school.

Max dreaded it but at the same time she was ready to walk in proud. she walked to her locker and to her class. It was odd. Henry didn't seem to care for Clarissa's attention, but trying way too hard for hers. Soon lunch came along and she was sitting alone. As there is a spot to be alone and sit. But Henry instantly found her.

" mind if I sit?" He asked

Max didn't even flinch. No response. Just her eating her lunch.

" Actually I do, so just leave me alone" max said.

" Max this is the longest you haven't talked to me. You know you can always come to me if something is wrong." He says putting his hand on her shoulder.

Max instantly shook it off. " don't touch me" she said with a angry soft tone.

" Max please, I need to know what I did to deserve being away from you so long."

Max made her way to the courtyard in the back that no one was at right now. Henry quickly followed behind.

" max please these weeks without you have been awful"

Thats when max broke.

" NO, you know what has been awful Henry. YOU forgetting my 12th birthday . Ditching me for Clarissa. But then it hit me, maybe you NEVER wanted to be my friend. Maybe this whole damn time it was a lie. You were just my friend cause everyone knew what a loser and loner I was and still am. I thought we were best friends. You NEVER have stood me up on my birthday. Henry were the hell were you. dont wander that cause I don't care. Just have fun with Clarissa your new best friend and stop trying to talk to me okay. " max finishes and starts to walk back inside.

"Max,Clarissa kissed me. It was on your birthday. I was going to pick up a gift for you, something that I KNEW you would love. But Clarissa was in the store and someone I guess snapped that picture. I swear I wouldn't ever want to be around Clarissa. She annoys me so much. Max I didn't get to see you though, beause my family had a family emergency that day and I couldn't get out of it. I should of called and I regret not so much. I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner. But max I can't lose you. I know I messed up big time but please just talk to me , you don't even have to forgive me, not now or ever. But I need you as a friend." He pleaded.

max looks at him for a slight second before looking down. And wipeing her nose.

"I can't, I'm sorry" is all she says before walking back in.

12. Chapter 11

The rest of 6th grade sucked.

In may of that year. Max's mom got remarried.

The worst day of max's life. she now had the worst step brother she could have. The one who got her so upset and hated her. It was hell how he treated her. And her new stepfather wasn't that nice either. But now they were in her life and there wasn't anything she could do about it.

though her mom changed her last name, she didn't. She wouldn't. Her dad still meant everything to her. And lately he was hanging out more with her. It was like old times. She was laughing more and smiling also. It was though now July. It was summer. And she was spending as much time with her dad as she could. Because this would be the second to last summer in California. She was moving next summer. To hawkins. It was bullshit how her mom blamed her dad for things and how he was the problem and max had to get away from him. She wished he could also come to hawkins but just live with him. The two of them. It seemed so easy yet it wasn't and wouldn't happen.

7th grade was so close. It was august now and a few weeks before they went back to school.

Max wondered how henry's summer had been. He probably was with Clarissa. Ugh the thought of her made make sick. She was the maybe je had been like her. Sitting and being bored most days. Just when she was in the middle of her thoughts her dad yelled " Max , its Henry" . Her stomach sunk. No I can't. I can't talk. She thought was was going to be sick and so she ran to the bathroom. Max then threw up and had to catch her breath. Then once cleaned up went downstairs and outside to the patio to see Henry.

"Hey Max, how are you, can you believe summer is almost over. Bummer right?" He says

max just shrugs and looks at him. His brown eyes staring into her

blue.

"Max I just need to know will we ever be friends again, because I really want to be, but I also don't want to keep waiting for you. It hurts me max. I'm in pain." He says

slowly tears were in max's eyes. Pain , something she knew all too well.

"Well your hanging out with Clarissa so , I've tried to keep my distance." Max says.

" what the hell max, you KNOW I would ditch Clarissa for you in a instant. You should of come up and talked to me. The only reason I'm talking to her is because I don't have anyone else. And sometimes having someone to talk to is nice. " he says.

" aren't you dating her, I heard you are" max says while walking with her hands in her pockets.

Henry stunned looked at her wondering why she asked this.

"What? No max , why would I date someone I can barely stand to even hear talk?" He asks.

" Someone told me that you were, and that you loved her." Max says as the tears well up more in her eyes.

" max I don't. Okay you have to believe me. " he says.

" she said you wouldn't ever love me , that I was just someone that you pretended to even be friends with. That I was just someone you pitted. Hearing this hurt. And still hurts." Max says.

"No, it isn't true max, why are you believing all these lies. None of them are true. " he says.

" BECAUSE I LOVED YOU HENRY, BUT I HAVE to protect myself, I would of looked stupid if i told you. Clarissa would have used it against me. I've wanted to tell you for so long, that your my best friend. But I also love you. Okay, the feeling I get when I look into your eyes, the way you crack jokes, the way you protect me and

challenge me to do new things. The way you let me lean on your chest. The way you sing me to sleep when we have sleepovers. But it can't happen. You were never my friend to begin with. So a relationship between on would never happen." Max finishes

Henry is silent. His mind has been blown.

then max walks up beside him and says " I think its time for you to go" rushing inside before the water works start.

Leaving Henry alone, to process what he had just heard.

13. Chapter 12

love. Its what max felt

The butterflies in her stomach whenever Henry was near. It had started back last year. Up until then he was her best friend. And only that. But as they got older, her feelings changed for him. And it wasn't till October of 6th grade that it hit her. She had a crush on him. Like a legit crush on her best friend. they always said that a best friend can be the best partner. Thats what happened to max. She wanted to date Henry. Her best friend. But at the same time she didn't want to risk ruining their friendship, if it was still there.

plus Clarissa would probably just make fun of me till I die if I did. But max wanted to be with Henry. So badly it made her chest hurt. As much as Clarissa had pinned him against her. He was the one she had so many firsts with. The one who was by her side through everything. So in her head it didn't seem as crazy to want him as her first real relationship.

She could seem them going far, though the rest of middle school and in high school still be going strong.

but just like that, in her thoughts again the doorbell rang. But it wasn't who she thought

" Listen mayfield , I don't know what you did to Henry but he won't listen to me or anything anymore. Stay away from him or else, ill have to tell everyone about how Mr Gray died and how YOU knew. We wouldn't want that would we?" She said.

Instantly max looked down.

" No, we wouldn't. So listen to me now clarissa. Ill stay away from Henry, as long as YOU never speak to me again and Keep your side of the promise," max say sas she closed the door.

And then she cries. Its over. Being close to Henry is not possible anymore. She can't have clarissa tell about mr gray. Or she would be in HUGE trouble. She would probably go to prison.

* next day*

Max walks into school , eyes showing how sleep deprived she is. But smiling and acting as happy and normal as she can. She can't let Henry suspect anything. Though she didn't get far as Henry saw her right away and speed walked up to her locker. " Max, so listen I have to tell you some-

" I can't." Was all max says while grabbing her books and rushing to class. Tears filling up in her eyes, and her forced to wipe them away. Sitting down in math. She just wanted to cry right there. But she couldn't. She had to act. Pretend she was okay. When that was the farthest thing from the truth. She felt like she was dying. That Henry was her air and being away from him was making her weak.

Henry though rushed in and ran over to max's desk.

" Max whats going on, tell me now. Do you need me to buy you a muffin? Or a water. Or do we need to go ditch a period to talk, what do you need. Tell me" he says

And thats when clarissa walks in.

" I thought I told you not to talk to him mayfield." She says

" He was talking to me, I swear. I wasn't. : but by this point max couldn't pretend anymore. She broke down on her knees.

" Oh max, you have just made a bad decision, I guess now I'll have to you know tell your " secret" she says.

" No no YOU CANT CLARISSA PLEASE. I SWEAR"

But that is when Henry steps in.

" WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO TO MAX? BECAUSE WHATEVER IT IS, SHE ISN'T DOING IT. YOU MADE HER AVIOD ME AND TOLD HER ALL THOSE HORRIBLE THINGS? WHO THE HELL ARE YOU." He says.

in all the years, max has rarely seen Henry mad. But he is furious right now. As he continues yelling at clarissa.

Max can't take it anymore, she runs. Out of the classroom. Out of the school. Its like she has a minute left to breathe. But Henry is quick to follow.

" Max I'm so sorry, but why didn't you tell me she was doing all this to you, I swear me you and my mom will make her pay. Get her suspended or somthing. Max I need you to look at me, please" he says touching her chin and pushing it up to look in his eyes. Max was mesmerized. His chocolate eyes were beautiful.

" Maxine Mayfield, your the most amazing girl I've ever met. The bravest and the funniest but most importantly the prettiest. The day I met you your red hair stood out to me. The way it glowed , I couldn't stop staring. I just knew I had to be friends with you. I am so sorry I missed your birthday ill never be able to live with myself for that. But if you let me I want to make it up to you. I want to spend a weekend with you, doing anything you want. Ill even skateboard if you want even though I suck at it. I mean it, anything you want to do ill do it. If you allow me. I also am sorry for not being here for you when you needed me , I've heard all about your family life from my mom. It broke my heart evreytime. I just wanted to go over and hug you and tell you it would be okay. I missed a whole grade with you being my best friend. I hated it. A lot of people wanted to try and help and be friends but I only wanted to be with you.

Max your the best, I seriously mean that with all my heart, and what I was trying to say earlier is that what you said yesterday about me, made me think and also cry. I went home and slowly took what you said at all the pictures of us. I just think we had our first big fight. I never want that again. Once was too much for me. And I want to say in return, your beautiful. Your red hair is the most beautiful thing. The way you plan our pranks makes me want to be more "bad" for you. The way you tease me, but just enough to make sure that I know you love and care for me. The way you allow me to hold your hand and kiss you cheek. Who knew at 3 years old I would meet the girl who still is my favorite person.

So can we please start over. Here ill start.

Max didn't know what he was doing but then he sat down at the table across from her now. And said

" Hi im Henry whats your name ?

Smiling and looking at her as he pointed to himself.

He then without hesitation made a funny face. Sticking out his tongue.

Max at first didn't reply. Instead blushed and smiled and looked down.

Henry then turned his head side to side. Waiting for a response.

Max then lifted her head and said

" Im Maxine Mayfield but I go by max for short"

She then without hesitation went over and sat next to him and grabbed his hand.

Then Henry looked at her for a good minute before saying.

" Max , will you give me the honor of being my girlfriend."

Soon the blue eyes started watering. Max who had already cried so much today, then let go of his hand and pulled him into a hug. She cried onto his shoulder. But then lifted her head and whispered in his ear. " yes, Henry it would be my honor" before she nuzzled into his shoulder taking in his scent for the first time in months. He also was taking in hers. The smell of the girl who he loved. The one who he wouldn't ever let be alone again. The one who he promised to take on MANY fun dates. The one who he would kiss whenever he got a chance to make sure the whole school knew she was his. The one who he would tell that he loved, every hour of every day. Because SHE deserved it. She deserved to be loved. To be put first. And Henry would make sure that damn happened.

14. Chapter 13

Henry finally put Clarissa in her place. She was suspended from school from all the harassment she put max through.

Though still loomed the question If she would tell the world about mr gray's death.

* flashback*

max was with her dad. Mr gray had just arrived ro work. Getting out of his car. Max being the adorable 5 year old she was started to run but her dad pulled her back.

"Sweetie we have to wait till he opens the ice cream store"

But max didn't want to wait. So she didn't she started to run but her dad then grabbed her and picked her up . She started fighting back. forgetting... forgetting that she had a unbalivable amount of abilities... she from the time she was 1 had developed these abilities. To move things. And to see what people were truly feeling about her. Though her mom told her once she got old enough. Around age 4. To NEVER use these abides. ever. One of them was not nice or right to use and the other, could hurt someone.

And on this day thats what she did... the force of her screams and kicks made a sound wave that was so powerful Mr gray fell to the ground. Hit right in the stomach, He looked lifeless. Max then turned to see mr gray just laying there.

Had she done this? Was this her fault? . he was dead. The police rushed to the scene as max's dad carried her up to the car. " max what have you done?" The blood running from mr gray's arms was indication that he was gone. It hurt. She hated when this happened. She tried so hard to control her feelings but. Then this happened.
flashback over

She knew why she had these abilities though. It was because her dad, was in a lab. Similar to the one in hawkins. luckily he didn't have much damage done to him. But he had passed down these abilities

that were " hidden" to his daughter.

No one ever knew, not even Henry. She promised her parents NEVER to tell anyone. Even a friend. She would be put in a asylum if someone ever found out. So thought her whole life she had done a pretty good job of having them under control. She hadn't had another incident like she had when she was 5. But sometimes she had been close. But for once, in her life she felt she had to tell Henry. He was now her boyfriend and he deserved to know. He would want to just protect her more anyway. So on this brisk October morning, max pulled Henry into the courtyard.

" Henry theres something I have to tell you something I should of told you a while ago. But made a promise to my parents not to... ' she said

Henry instantly was worried. " max, whats going on, am I not being a good boyfriend? " he asked

Max instantly shook her head " no no, not that, your the best boyfriend, I could ask for. Its just that, see I'm not normal. "

" geez max, I know that, your BETTER then normal" he says pushing a piece of hair behind her ear.

" No I mean, I have abilities Henry, like two abilities that I have had to keep under lock. Because of something horrible I did when I was 5." Max says

" Max what do you mean abilities, ?" He ask

" Henry, I can move you and push you away without my hands. With my mind, and um, I can read how your feeling, if its true or not" max says trying not to cry

" but Henry I haven't ever used them on you, I promise, I would only ever, if you told me to. But I need you to keep it a secret. Your the one person I trust with my life. Please Henry don't see me as any different.

Henry looks at her her, blue eyes yet again watering , seeing her get so sad lately has made him hurt. He wanted to take all the pain away

form her. she didn't deserve her mom and step father and step brother's bullshit.

Henry without thinking, leaned in and kissed her. Wanting to take all the pain away. She then took her hand and reached for his as she kissed him back. But then pulled away.

" Henry also there is one more thing. Just one tiny thing. Um, I killed mr gray... I didn't mean to I swear but I did, I was 5 and stupid and used my abilities by accident. My dad luckily found a way to cover it up. But if Clarissa tells I'm dead. Ill be in jail or a mental asylum. She can't tell. She just can't. " max says. As Henry kisses her check.

"Listen max, I won't let that happen, I know I'm still taking in your new abilities, which sound so cool honestly, but I won't let her tell you secret. Its safe with me and we will get through this together. I love you so much". And with that he stood up and reached for her hand. She instantly took his. And she stood up. " I love you more Henry, thanks for never judging me, honestly I don't know what I would do without you" max says as they make their way inside the school. Another day.

" You excited for the field trip tomorrow? " Henry asked. Squeezing her hand.

" Oh, I'm MORE then excited, i mean being with you all day at the field trip and then having a sleepover with you, it will be perfect." She says as she smiles.

Little did they know someone was coming. Well some people...

15. Chapter 14

" Ah today's the day. Max who recently had started to collect dresses again, picked a blue one and tied her hair back in a pony tail. Then Henry's mom came to pick her up and take them to school. Max hopped in the back. Resting her head on Henry as he kissed her head.

" I've missed you max, even though it's only been a night ah." Henry's mom looked at them through the mirror.

They looked so happy. When Henry had told his mom that they were officially dating. Henry's mom couldn't handle the news. She was so happy. Not that she didn't see this coming but this meant , that she was one step closer to having max as her daughter in law. She fully supported this relationship and would forever do so. Max had a place in their family since she was 3. soon though they were at school. And Henry got out first and then max took Henry's hand and got out.

" Have fun you two, I'll pick you up here after, love you guys" Mrs Chen said as she pulled away.

" My mom is too much sometimes, sorry max" Henry says

" are you kidding me? I love your mom, she's the best and she loves me I feel sometimes more than my own mom" max says looking down.

The two checked in and boarded the bus and then cuddled and rested and at the end of the trip even kissed, which most of the people around them thought was gross. Max and Henry were one of the only couples in the school. But soon they were there. Los Angeles aquarium there were a lot of other schools there and also just people. But Henry and max vowed to stay together.

Though when looking at the stingrays, Henry told max he would be right back he was just going to the restroom close by. Max nodded but in the back of her mind didn't hear him. She was so mesmerized by the stingrays.

" Beautiful aren't they? This huge tank is awesome. But my favorite

by far are the pufferfish. The way they puff up, I still laugh" says a voice next to her.

Then max snaps out of her daydreaming and turns and see not Henry but someone else. He was of African American decent. " yeah the stingrays are cool, I guess' Max then looks around frantically for Henry. Where is he.

" Are you okay? , let me guess you got separated from your partner, well I'm more then happy to help. If you want. "

In that moment max felt alone and scared. But this boy in front of her was all she had so she just nodded. He then went over to get one of his other friends and then the three of them were off. Soon they max saw her teacher and Henry right next to her.

" Oh my gosh max, I was so worried. Thank gosh your okay. " he says as he hugs max and kisses her forehead.

max though then looks back. " thanks, for your help it means a lot. " she says letting go of Henry and going to shake the boys hand.

" Im max, by the way sorry I probably should of introduced myself earlier" she said she she smiled at him.

" Im Lucas , its a pleasure to meet you and help you max"

Lucas then turned and start to walk away when max goes after him, " hey do you go to school round here? Because if you do id love to pay you back and get you something." Max says.

" No I do not, I live out east, but it was a pleasure helping you max" he says as he walks back to his schools meeting area.

Max then turns back with a smile on her face.

" Lucas" she thought 'Lucas"

16. Chapter 15

" Did he do anything to you?" Henry asked once he saw the boy walk away.

max shook her head. " no, I was just really worried cause one moment you were next to me and the next you were gone, I got too damn mesmerized at watching the stingrays. And he started talking to me." She said slowly trying to hide her smile.

Henry then pulls her close. She heard his heart beat, and it was beating fast.

" I thought you were gone, I was so worried max, thank gosh your okay, now lets go to the gift shop and let me buy you something." He says. Max smiles and this time she doesn't hide it, taking his hand and intertwining it with hers.

This is what happiness feels like she thought.

In the end max picked out a stingray and Henry got it for her. " happy late birthday max." He says as he gave her the stringray as they walked out of the gift shop and outside to wait for the rest of the group to go home.

max though once outside turned to him and kissed him. The feeling she got when she kissed him, was something words couldn't describe. it was something she wanted more of each time. She could feel his hand on her waist, pulling her closer. This latest for a minute before the teacher told them to board the bus. " thank you Henry, I love this. And I can't wait for the fun sleepover that will happen tonight." She said.

Max smiled as she put her head on his chest to rest. But in her head she was thinking that she for the first time today had used one of her abilities. Just for a split second. She when Lucas was walking away, looked in his mind, to tell how he was feeling. If he was happy with helping her or he just did it because someone told him to. But she saw it was genuine.

" If only girls were that nice and sweet back home" he thought to himself. That thought made max's heart beat so fast. But then shook the thought out of her head. And thought about Henry. How much fun this field trip had been. And the fact that they were going to stay up late talking, playing games and would miss school together tomorrow. If that isn't relationship goals then she didn't know what was.

When they arrived back at the school, Mrs Chen was there to greet them.

" How was the trip you two ?' She asked.

" It was good until max got separated from me, I almost had a panic attack, thankfully some other dude , saw her and was nice enough to help her get back to me. Other then that it was good though mom

" I'm glad you guys found each other again. I see Henry bought you a stingray" mrs Chen said smiling and patting max on the shoulder.

" Yes , he did, mrs Chen " max said.

" Now lets get home so you two can have your birthday celebration, tonight and tomorrow. I ordered pizza for tonight, I also got some snacks for you guys and some movies. " she said.

" Mom , you are the best, thanks" Henry said before hugging his mom and then going back to max and opening the car door for her. But it was then that max saw another bus pull up.

" We had to stop here, this was the closest school. Our bus broke down to get to the airport. So we need to stay here for a few hours till we get some cars to go to the airport." She heard someone say in the distance.

In a instant max's eyes widened. It was him. It was Lucas.

She wanted to go run to him but Henry stoped her.

" Come on max , we don't want the pizza to get cold do we?" He says not noticing who or what max was staring at.

Max still staring at him , until he see her and he waves and says " oh my gosh max".

Max though then is turned to Henry.

" No we don't " she says as she sighs. before turning back to look at Lucas one last time. Before getting into the car

Lucas's POV

there she was. The redhead she had helped earlier that day. max. Lucas guessed she went to this school. She was getting into a car and a guy was holding the door open for her. But she was looking at him. Though then the guy said something in her ear and she looked at me once more. And got into the car and drove way. It killed Lucas that it was probably the last time he would see max. Although he had only known her for a minute. She was so sweet and was like no girl back in hawkins. That boy who held the door open for her, was lucky. Lucas assumed it was her boyfriend. In a few hours he would be going back to hawkins , but he wouldn't forget the redhead who he helped that day. She was not forgettable.